



DIRK KEMPTHORNE
GOVERNOR

February 1, 2006

The Honorable Norman Y. Mineta
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Mineta:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding recent efforts by the Federal Aviation Administration to evaluate the consolidation of some Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) facilities. It is my understanding that Boise Airport is one of the facilities under consideration

The Boise Airport serves a region that continues to experience exponential growth, necessitating expansion of the airport's facilities. Over the past few years, I have been working with Idaho's congressional delegation in the effort to secure federal funds for the construction of a new air traffic control tower at the Boise Airport. So far, Congress has designated roughly \$16 million to date for this purpose. The federal request has included a budget for construction of a new control tower complete with an electronics suite, including radar approach control.

While I understand and support efforts to streamline government expense, I find little savings opportunity with the removal of radar approach control from the Boise Airport to Salt Lake City. I question the value of this consolidation when other facilities in the region that handle less air traffic are not under consideration for similar consolidation.

I also have several concerns about safety and service for air traffic at the largest airport in our state. I believe that knowledge of the area by the radar controllers is critical to safety. This interest has been expressed by controllers and pilots, both with a vested interest in personal and passenger safety. Additionally, given the unstable weather conditions in the Boise area, firsthand updates on local weather conditions are improved by the added ability of a local radar controller to simply look out the window.

Finally, the Boise Airport has National Guard operations co-located at the airport property. These local military operations require a great deal of flexibility that a Salt

Lake City approach could not provide. I have a vested interest in maintaining every advantage I can provide to Idaho's Air National Guard. My state has some of the finest guardsmen in our nation, and those men and women are serving admirably in the war against terror. I am in disfavor of anything that might affect their ability to train or perform admirably.

If TRACON facilities were to move to Salt Lake City, Idaho would be the only state in the nation without radar approach equipment capability. In addition, consolidation would limit or end the airport's ability to do simultaneous visual approaches, which would effectively make the Boise Airport a one-runway airport and significantly decrease capacity at a time when growth in capacity is imperative.

Given that you are in the process of making a determination on this proposed consolidation, I want to register with you my concerns and urge you to retain radar approach control at the Boise Airport. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dirk Kempthorne", with a large, stylized initial "D" and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

DIRK KEMPTHORNE
Governor

DK:lg

Cc: The Honorable Marion Blakey, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, NW, Washington DC, 20591